



Fort Riley Post



Soldiers, families march

70th Engineers, 541st Combat Service Support Battalion, Morris Hill students donate toys for Christmas

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New office staff will help home buyers

By Anna Morelock
Staff writer

A giant pair of scissors held by new homeowners Spc. Shane Warren, his wife, Cathryn, and son, Ethan, snipped the red ribbon at the new USDA Rural Development Housing Office at Fort Riley Dec. 13. The parting of the ribbon brought to fruition an agreement signed by the two federal entities in June of this year.

"This is a historic agreement between two federal entities, and quite honestly that's the way the federal government should work – partnering together to help so many people," said Chuck Banks, Kansas director of USDA Rural Development.

The USDA office at Fort Riley will provide Soldiers and civilians with loan prequalification, home-buyer counseling and financing options to buy off-post housing in rural areas. Eligible areas are communities of less than 20,000 population, which includes nearly 100 communities in 11 counties surrounding Fort Riley.

Kansas is guaranteed \$47 million in assistance through the USDA's Rural Development Agency for housing. In addition, according to a press release from U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts' (R-Kan.) office, an extra \$25 million from the USDA's Rural Housing Agency will be dedicated solely to helping military and civilian families coming to Fort Riley purchase homes.

Over the next year and a half, the population at Fort Riley will go from about 12,000 to 25,000 family members and add 3,000 to 4,000 civilian workers said Maj. Gen. Dennis Hardy, commanding general of Fort Riley and the 24th Infantry Division (Mech).

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) spoke at the ribbon cutting, calling the arrival of new troops to Fort Riley the "best piece of economic news that has happened in our state in decades, if not generations."

Where to go:

The new USDA office is located on the second floor of Carr Hall, 45 Barry Ave.

Those interested in finding out more about home financing options available through the USDA should stop by the office or call (785) 239-6473.

"It's a wonderful Christmas present to the state of Kansas, and to people who live here and to our citizens," Moran said. "Most of the communities would love to be in the position that the communities that surround Fort Riley are in today as a result of the Christmas present of these Soldiers and their families arriving."



Post/Morelock

New homeowners, Spc. Shane Warren, his wife, Cathryn, and their son, Ethan, cut the ribbon at the opening of the new USDA Rural Development Housing Office on Fort Riley Dec. 13.